COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN SERVICES
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ADMINISTRATION
CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Student Guide to the MSA 699 RRA Process

(Revised Fall 2024)

Introduction to the Research Review Application Process

The majority of MSA students will use the MSA program's research review application process.

The exceptions to this policy are those cases where the student's work involves human subjects **and** would be considered "research" under the federal guidelines. Projects that constitute "research" are those projects using human subjects that generate findings that can be generalized and that are intended from the outset of the project to be disseminated to a wider audience. For example, a student conducting a project and using human subjects with the intent to publish the findings or report the findings to a broader audience, i.e., state or regional, national or international conference or outside of the researcher's organization, must complete CITI training and seek IRB approval. On the other hand, a student conducting a work-related project with human subjects and reporting the findings within the organization is not required to seek IRB approval.

Keep in mind the organization in which you are collecting data (such as a hospital) may require an IRB to be completed. If this is the case, be sure to check on how long this will take. If it is not completed quickly, it may be better to work with another organization.

If required to do complete CITI training, you should consult the MSA Student's Guide to CITI. If required to seek IRB approval, you should consult the MSA Student's Guide to IRBNet (Part 1 and Part 2). All publications can be found at the [MSA Capstone Guide and RRA web site](#) (Important Note: Either Research Review Application approval or IRB approval must be obtained before you begin to collect data.)

For most MSA students, you will complete the Research Review Application form and submit the form along with appropriate attachments to your instructor. The application form is available in a fillable PDF version or a fillable WORD version. With either version, you need to complete the form, insert your signature, and do a "save as" with a unique name. Attach the form and any other supporting documents to an e-mail and e-mail all documents to your instructor. The application form is available by clicking [here](#) **Approval notifications will be sent by e-mail and data collection may only begin when that approval has been received.**   E-mail approvals will be sent by either Christina Prout or Parveeza Gala. Please review the steps on the following page for a better understanding of the paperwork flow in MSA 699 with the new research review application process in place.

It is important that students follow the steps in the RRA process below to minimize delays and avoid confusion:

1. Student completes Chapters 1 and 3 of the research project and sends it to the instructor for review.
2. Instructor approves research proposal (chapters 1 and 3) with recommended edits/changes and student is permitted to proceed to the next step, or instructor rejects research proposal for major changes.
3. Instructor approves student to move forward with Research Review Application (RRA) found [here](#). Please create a folder on your OneDrive (http://onedrive.cmich.edu/) and

name it "MSA699_RRA_YourLastName". Upload all the documentation to this folder. Please set the folder's sharing permission to "People in Central Michigan University" + "can view." Note: IRB approval and CITI training is required if human subjects are used and if the project meets the IRB's definition of research).

4. Instructor reviews Research Review Application, provides feedback, and when the application is complete, signs off on the form and sends to the MSA program office.

5. MSA program office reviews the RRA form and supporting documents. If needed, feedback is provided to the student and instructor. When complete, an approval e-mail is sent to the student with a CC to the instructor and the program center.

6. Student receives Research Review Application approval and starts data collection.

What do I need to submit to my instructor?

Here are some general instructions (Be sure to provide sufficient detail on the application form):

If surveys are planned, submit the following forms to your instructor:

1. Research Review Application found at
   https://www.cmich.edu/academics/colleges/college-education-human-services/departments/masters-of-science-administration/student-resources/capstone-guides-and-research-approval
2. Copy of survey
3. Consent form or cover letter/see templates found at
   https://www.cmich.edu/academics/colleges/college-education-human-services/departments/masters-of-science-administration/student-resources/capstone-guides-and-research-approval
4. Permission letter (signed and on the organization's letterhead) (If you do not have access to a scanner, please fax the letter to 989-774-2575). A permission letter template is available on the research review web page. Samples are available in the Student Guide.

Send all information to your instructor by e-mail. **In the subject line put Research Review Application/<insert your name>**

For a project which involves non-human subjects data (for example, financial data, government policies, etc.) or data that is already summarized and de-identified, submit the following forms to your instructor:

1. Research Review Application found at
   https://www.cmich.edu/academics/colleges/college-education-human-services/departments/masters-of-science-administration/student-resources/capstone-guides-and-research-approval
2. A signed permission letter on letterhead if the data is not available to the general public (If you do not have access to a scanner, please fax the letter to 989-774-

2575). A permission letter template is available on the research review web page. Samples are available in the Student Guide.

Send all information to your instructor by e-mail. **In the subject line put Research Review Application/<insert your name>**

If interviews are planned, submit the following forms to your instructor (note current covid-19 restrictions):

1. Research Review Application found at https://www.cmich.edu/academics/colleges/college-education-human-services/departments/masters-of-science-administration/student-resources/capstone-guides-and-research-approval
2. Copy of interview questions
3. Adult consent form or informal interview consent form (use the adult consent form if the interview is formal or you are interviewing individuals with whom you have a relationship/see templates found at https://www.cmich.edu/academics/colleges/college-education-human-services/departments/masters-of-science-administration/student-resources/capstone-guides-and-research-approval
4. Permission letter (signed and on the organization's letterhead) (If you do not have access to a scanner, please fax the letter to 989-774-2575). A permission letter template is available on the research review web page. Samples are available in the Student Guide.

Send all information to your instructor by e-mail. **In the subject line put Research Review Application/<insert your name>**

Introduction to the Research Review Application form:

On the next pages, you will see sample Research Review Application forms. **Your cmich e-mail account is the preferred e-mail address to use.** The EPN is the section number of your course, such as 22394155. While your project description should not be lengthy, be sure to be specific in your narrative. Consider this a summary where you will either write about:

1. Purpose of the study
2. Type of data to be analyzed
3. Source(s) of data

Or,

1. Purpose of the study
2. A description of the subjects, how they are selected, and the researcher's relationship to the subjects
3. A description of the methodology (in other words, how is the survey distributed and collected, or, is it a phone interview or a face to face interview?)

See the guidance on pages 5 and 6 as well as the following samples to determine the appropriate attachments to send along with your RRA form.

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RESEARCH REVIEW APPLICATION
FOR MSA 699 AND EDU 776 CAPSTONE COURSE PROJECT

Project title: A Comparison of Employee Insurance Plans at Mid-American Conference Universities

Student name: Sally Researcher   Student ID#: 25689
E-mail address: resea1sl@cmich.edu Work phone: 989-774-0000   Home phone: 989-772-000

Concentration: MSA-Human Resources Administration

Instructor's name: Dr. Albert Einstein Instructor e-mail: einst1aa@cmich.edu

Course: MSA 699:   EPN: 22120666_____   Program center: Main campus/Mt. Pleasant

Do you intend to use human subjects or human subjects data in your project? Yes ☐ No **X**

Do you intend to publish your project or present project results outside of your organization? Yes ☐ No X

If you answered "yes" on both questions, you are required to complete CITI training and seek approval through CMU's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB process requires registration in IRBManager and submission of your application materials and supporting documents through IRBManager. Please consult with your instructor and the appropriate program office for assistance.

If you answered "no" to one or both questions, you may use this form for your research review. Read the following directions:

Non-human subject research	Human subjects research
In the box below describe the purpose of your research, describe the data you plan to use, and specify the sources of your data (URL, organizational source, etc.) **Required attachments**: Permission letter on the organization's letterhead if the data is not available to the general public.	In the box below describe the purpose of your research; specify the source of your subject pool, the number of subjects, and the selection criteria. Specify your relationship to the subjects (co-worker, supervisor, work in same organization, etc.). Describe your research methodology.

	Required attachments: Copy of survey or interview questions, cover letter or consent form, permission letter on the organization's letterhead if the subject pool is not selected from a public source such as a phone directory or web page.

The purpose of the study is to determine if improvements can be made to the existing employee benefit plan at Central Michigan University. The researcher will compare employee insurance plans at all Mid-American Conference universities. The researcher will use the details of Employee insurance benefits/disability plans/life insurance plans/major medical plans/wellness programs that are found through Internet searches. Examples of data sources are as follows:

http://www.utoledo.edu/depts/hr/index.html
https://www.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/payrolleb
https://www.kent.edu/hr/benefits

Data sources are available to the general public. A permission letter is not needed.

Please check all that apply:

X My project is work-related X My project is related to my concentration ☐ My project is not related to my work or to my concentration. Please provide a rationale for a project that is not work-related or concentration-related:

Directions: Type in your name as verification/approval of the information presented in this application. Your signature also confirms your commitment to appropriate research ethics while conducting this research: **Submit this form and applicable attachments to your instructor. Please wait for written approval prior to beginning data collection.**

Student signature: Sally Researcher _____ Date: 1/15/21 _____

Instructor signature: Albert Einstein _____ Date: 1/16/21

Program approval signature: _____ Date: _____

Sample Research Review Application for a project with human subjects and using an online survey:

<div align="center">

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RESEARCH REVIEW APPLICATION
FOR MSA 699/699 AND EDU 776 CAPSTONE COURSE PROJECT

</div>

Project title: Generational Differences at Summit Corporation

Student name: Sally Researcher   Student ID#: 25689
E-mail address: resea1sl@cmich.edu Work phone: 989-774-0000   Home phone: 989-772-0000

Concentration: MSA-Human Resources Administration

Instructor's name: Dr. Albert Einstein Instructor e-mail: einst1aa@cmich.edu

Course: MSA 699:   EPN: 22120666_____   Program center: Main campus/Mt. Pleasant

Do you intend to use human subjects or human subjects data in your project? Yes **X** No ☐

Do you intend to publish your project or present project results outside of your organization? Yes ☐ No X

If you answered "yes" on both questions, you are required to complete CITI training and seek approval through CMU's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB process requires registration in IRBManager and submission of your application materials and supporting documents through IRBManager. Please consult with your instructor and the appropriate program office for assistance.

If you answered "no" to one or both questions, you may use this form for your research review. Read the following directions:

Non-human subject research	Human subjects research
In the box below describe the purpose of your research, describe the data you plan to use, and specify the sources of your data (URL, organizational source, etc.) **Required attachments**: Permission letter on the organization's letterhead if the data is not available to the general public.	In the box below describe the purpose of your research; specify the source of your subject pool, the number of subjects, and the selection criteria. Specify your relationship to the subjects (co-worker, supervisor, work in same organization, etc.). Describe your research methodology.

	Required attachments: Copy of survey or interview questions, cover letter or consent form, permission letter on the organization's letterhead if the subject pool is not selected from a public source such as a phone directory or web page.

This study examines the effect of generational differences at Summit Corporation. All 450 employees will be invited to take an anonymous, online 10-question survey. The population includes approximately 300 women and 150 men. Approximately 125 subjects fall into the Baby Boomers age range, approximately 200 subjects fall into the Gen X age range, and approximately 125 subjects fall into the Gen Y age range. The researcher will not ask any questions concerning ethnicity or health status. The consent document with a link to the online survey will be distributed through the organization's e-mail system. The researcher supervises some of the potential subjects and this will be noted in the consent document. The data collected will provide useful information regarding worker attitudes generational differences at Summit Corporation. The benefits to the study are that the participants will be assisting researchers in learning about how generations differ in the workplace. This will ultimately help human resources professionals better meet the needs of all employees. The researcher will compile the data and draw some conclusions which will be available to all participants as well as to the organization's training and development department.

Please check all that apply:
X My project is work-related **X** My project is related to my concentration ☐ My project is not related to my work or to my concentration. Please provide a rationale for a project that is not work-related or concentration-related:

Directions: Type in your name as verification/approval of the information presented in this application. Your signature also confirms your commitment to appropriate research ethics while conducting this research: S**ubmit this form and applicable attachments to your instructor. Please wait for written approval prior to beginning data collection.**

Student signature: <u>Sally Researcher</u> Date: <u>2/1/21</u>

Instructor signature: <u>Albert Einstein</u> Date: <u>2/22/21</u>

Program approval signature: _____ Date: _____

Routing: Student, Instructor, Program Office, Notification to Student/Instructor, Document Imaging/SLCM Coding

Please see the following pages for sample attachments for a project with human subjects and using a web-based survey:

1. **Sample survey cover letter or consent form (either is appropriate/only one is needed)**
2. **Sample survey**
3. **Sample permission letter**

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Date

Dear Participant:

My name is Sally Researcher and I am a graduate student at Central Michigan University. For my final project, I am examining the effect of generational differences at SUMMIT Corporation. Because you are a fellow employee, I am inviting you to participate in this study by completing the attached survey.

The following questionnaire will require approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name. Copies of the project will be provided to my Central Michigan University instructor and to the training and development department at Summit Corporation. If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible and return the completed questionnaires promptly by clicking on the survey link found at the end of this letter. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time.

Although the researcher supervises or works with some of the participants, this survey will in no way impact your position with the company as I will have no way of knowing who participated and who did not. Your responses are anonymous. Participation is voluntary and opting to participate or not will have no effect on your job or position with Summit Corporation. For those who participate, no risk or discomfort is anticipated.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. The data collected will provide useful information regarding employee attitudes about generational differences at Summit Corporation. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at the number listed below. Please feel free to e-mail me if you would like a summary copy of the study.

Please not that if you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, you may report (anonymously if you so choose) any complaints to the MSA Program by calling 989-774-6525 or addressing a letter to the MSA Program, Rowe 222, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

Sincerely,

Sally Researcher, (989) 774-000 or resea1sa@cmich.edu

Faculty Monitor: Dr. Albert Einstein, einst1aa@cmich.edu

CLICK THIS LINK TO BEGIN THE SURVEY: www.onlinesurvey.com/Summitgeneration/

Thanks for your participation.

Study Title: Generational Differences at Summit Corporation

Investigator: Sally Researcher, MSA Program, resea1sl@cmich.edu

Faculty Monitor: Dr. Albert Einstein, MSA Program, einst1aa@cmich.edu

Introductory Statement

My name is Sally Researcher and I am a graduate student at Central Michigan University. As part of my research, I am examining the effect of generational differences at Summit Corporation. All employees are receiving this survey invitation. Because you are an employee of Summit Corporation, I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing an online survey. The data collected will provide useful information regarding employee attitudes about generational differences at Summit Corporation. If you would like a summary copy of this study please send an email to me at resea1sa@cmich.edu (it is not necessary to complete the survey in order to receive a copy of the results). Completion of the online survey will indicate your willingness to participate in this study.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to gather data about the differences between generations in the workplace so that professionals in human resources can better understand how to meet the needs of all employees.

What will I do in this study?

If you consent to take this study, you will open the link to an online 10-question survey which is found at the end of this document. This survey is available to all of the Summit Corporation's 450 employees. All answers will be anonymous because no names or job titles are asked for in the survey. Surveys will be completed and submitted online through the link at the end of this document. The researcher will compile the data and draw some conclusions which will be available to all participants.

How long will it take me to do this?

This survey will likely take you about 15-20 minutes to complete. It can be taken any time until the survey deadline of July 1, 2017 at midnight. There is no advance preparation needed.

Are there any risks of participating in the study?

Although the researcher supervises or works with some of the participants, this survey will in no way impact your position with the company as I will have no way of knowing who participated and who did not. Participants are assured that their responses are anonymous. Participation is voluntary and opting to participate or not will have no effect on your job or position with Summit Corporation. For those who participate, no risk or discomfort is anticipated.

What are the benefits of participating in the study?

The benefits to participating in the study are that the participants will be assisting researchers in learning about how generations differ in the workplace. This will ultimately help human resources professionals better meet the needs of all employees.

Will anyone know what I do or say in this study (Confidentiality)?

All surveys are anonymous. I will see each survey, but will not be able to identify who completed it. The project will be shared with my faculty monitor. Data will be compiled and a copy of this study will be provided to the training and development department at Summit Corporation.

Will I receive any compensation for participation?

There is no compensation or fee to be paid to any participant in this study. Participation is voluntary.

Is there a different way for me to receive this compensation or the benefits of this study?

No; there is no compensation for participating.

Who can I contact for information about this study?

For more information about the study, you can contact the researcher, Sally Researcher with the following contact information:

> Sally Researcher, (989) 774-0000 or by e-mail at resea1sl@cmich.edu
> or, you may e-mail by project advisor at einst1aa@cmich.edu

Please not that if you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, you may report (anonymously if you so choose) any complaints to the MSA Program by calling 989-774-6525 or addressing a letter to the MSA Program, Rowe 222, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

Additional Information

You are free to refuse to participate in this research project or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in the project at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your participation will not affect your relationship with the institution(s) involved in this research project.

Clicking on the survey link below implies my consent to participate in this research. This copy of the form is for me to keep for my records.

CLICK THIS LINK TO BEGIN THE SURVEY: www.onlinesurvey.com/Summitgeneration/

Thank you for your participation!

Note to MSA 699 students: You may choose either the consent form or the survey cover letter. You do not need both for a survey that is returned anonymously.

Generational Differences at Summit Corporation: Survey

Instructions: Do NOT include your name on this survey. Participation is voluntary. Please answer the questions below by clicking on the best answer. Thanks for your participation.

1. Please select the years in which you were born:
   o 1940-1949
   o 1950-1959
   o 1960-1969
   o 1970-1979
   o 1980-1989
   o 1990-1999
   o Prefer not to answer

2. Please select your gender
   o Male
   o Female
   o Prefer not to answer

3. For the majority of the time, do you prefer to work alone or with others?
   o By myself
   o In a small group (2-3 people)
   o In a group or team (3-10 people)
   o Other (please explain):
   _____
   o Prefer not to answer

4. For the majority of the time, do you prefer to work on one task or many tasks at a time?
   o On one task at a time
   o Some tasks at one time (2-5)
   o Many tasks at one time (6+)
   o Prefer not to answer

5. How long do you intend to stay in your current position at this company?
   o 0-6 months
   o 6 months to 1 year
   o 1-3 years
   o 3-5 years
   o 5-10 years
   o Until I retire

o   Other (please explain):

_____

o   Prefer not to answer

6. Which generations do you find are easiest for you to relate to in this work environment?

o   People who are younger than me

o   People who are generally the same age as me

o   People who are older than me

o   There is no difference

o   Other (please explain):

_____

o   Prefer not to answer

7. How enthusiastic are you about using new or emerging technology in the workplace?

o   Very excited by new technology and use it as much as possible

o   Like technology and willing to use it frequently

o   No opinion about technology and use it as needed

o   Hate using technology and use it as little as possible

o   Other (please explain):

_____

o   Prefer not to answer

8. **Please rank the following items** in order of importance to you, with #1 being the MOST important to you and #4 being the LEAST important to you. Feel free to add up to two items (if you add items, your rating scale will have more items).

_____ Work

_____ Family

_____ Social Life   _____

Recreation

_____ Other (please explain):

_____

_____ Other (please explain):

_____

Please answer the following questions in the space provided.

9. How would you describe the work habits of people in your generation? Please list characteristics, behaviors, values, beliefs, or any other items you feel describe your generation.

10. What are some of the challenges and advantages you see with working with people of a different generation? Please be specific. If you prefer not to answer, simply skip this question and go to the next.

When you are satisfied with your answers, please submit your anonymous survey by clicking on the button below.

SUBMIT

SUMMIT CORPORATION
2326 Pennsylvania Blvd.
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
989-775-6565
http://www.Summitcorp.com

Date: January 8, 2021

Sally Researcher

4444 S. Madison

Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Dear Ms. Researcher:

I have reviewed your request to conduct a research project involving the Summit Corporation and the survey material that will be used. I feel that this project will be beneficial to the Summit Corporation as well as the project's participants. You have my permission to use the Summit Corporation employees as the subject pool for this project.

Contact Mary Richards for the list of e-mail addresses. If you have any questions regarding this letter of approval, please give me a call at 989-775-6523.

Sincerely,

S R Willow

G. R. Willow

CEO, Summit Corporation

Sample project descriptions for the Research Review Application form:

A project using company data:

LMP Widget Corporation is the third largest widget producer in the United States. The researcher will analyze production rates, production costs, and order fulfillment in order to determine the feasibility of adding a third production shift. The researcher will use internal production logs, accounting data, and purchase order information in this analysis. This project and the use of these company data has been approved by the CFO of LMP Widget Corporation. A signed permission letter on company letterhead is included with this application.

A project using a web-based survey and subjects selected through an Internet search:

The purpose of this study is to examine healthcare and learning institutions' strategic initiatives geared towards reducing the current and pending physician shortages in the rural areas of Kansas. The information would be analyzed to determine which strategic plan is the most conducive in addressing the physician situation in the area, state and nation. Alternative strategic plans will be developed. A web-based survey will be made available to approximately 20 healthcare institutions in the selected rural areas and to medical schools in the state. Targeted institutions for the survey were selected through an Internet search.

Note: Along with the Research Review Application form, the student researcher will also send a cover letter or consent form and a copy of the survey to the instructor.

A project using summarized company survey data:

The Pink Roof Inn has accumulated three years of customer satisfaction survey data that has never been analyzed. The purpose of this project is to analyze this survey data and present recommendations to management in the areas of facility and staff training improvements. The survey questions included the customer's overall hotel experience as well as specific questions about the room amenities, the restaurant facilities, front desk staff, cleaning staff, wait staff, and suggestions for improvements. The survey data will be provided to the researcher in a summarized format. A signed permission letter (on hotel letterhead) is included with this application.

A project using factual organizational data:

The purpose of this study is to analyze the feasibility of replacing Blackboard with a free, open-source learning management system at Outer Limits University in order to preserve financial resources.

Data analyzed for this project will include:
　　　　A list of plugins and their functionality for OLU's existing Blackboard system
　　　　The server configuration for OLU's existing Blackboard system
　　　　Usage and maximum load statistics for OLU's existing Blackboard system
　　　　 OLU's licensing and support costs associated with Blackboard
　　　　 The department and staff structure currently in place to support Blackboard

A signed permission letter from the VP of Information Technology at OLU is included with this application. Staff in the areas of academic computing, Blackboard administration, and purchasing will supply information about Blackboard plugins and functionality, server configuration, and load statistics, details on Blackboard's licensing and support costs, and the support structure for Blackboard.

A project using a survey that is returned through interoffice mail:

In January 20XX, the ABC Corporation laid off approximately 10% of their workforce. The increased workload plus feelings of insecurity in the remaining employees contributed to low morale and descreased prductivity. The purpose of this project is to examine the attitudes, morale level, and perceptions of employees who have experienced this period of downsizing in the corporation. The objective is to make recommendations to management to improve morale and make positive changes during the period of restructuring. The researcher will invite every 3rd name form the employee roster to participate in the anonymous 12-question survey. Surveys will be returned through interoffice mail. The researcher is a supervisor of 20 employees. Those 20 employees will not be included in the subject pool. There are approximately 600 employees and the researcher estimates that there will be approximately 115 women and 85 men in the subject pool after names are selected from the employee roster. The only demographic question is length of employment. It is estimated that 50 will have been employed 0-5 years, 75 for 6-10 years, 40 for 11-15 years, and 35 for 16+ years.

Note: Along with the Research Review Application form, the student researcher will also send a cover letter or consent form, a copy of the survey, and a signed permission letter (on corporation letterhead) to the insructor.

A project using data that is available to the general public:

The purpose of study is to determine if the Pay for Performance Program has improved customer service within the Postal Service. The data to be analyzed will include First-Class Mail on-time delivery scores; mail volumes; total factor productivity; complement; opertating expenses; pay for performance program. Sources for the data are the following:

USPS Final reports: https://about.usps.com/what/financials/
GAO key reports:
https://www.gao.gov/key_issues/us_postal_service_financial_viability/issue_summary#t=1
Inspector General reports: https://www.uspsoig.gov/document-library
www.usps.com

A project using a personal interview:

The Second Bank of Atlanta adopted a new employee performance evaluation system one year ago. Reviews are now done semiannually and involve both self-review and peer review. Staff members also evaluate the supervisors. Interviews will be conducted with a sampling of staff and supervisors to assess the impact of changing the performance evaluation system. The study will help to determine if the new system has opened up communication among staff or do staff think the new system is less effective than the previous system. There are approximately 85

employees at the bank. The researcher intends to interview 5-6 supervisors and 8-10 staff employees. The only demographic that will be reported is whether the subject is a supervisor or an employee. There are 23 supervisors and 65 staff employees.

Theresearcher will post a notice in the breakroom requesting volunteers. If the list of volunteers does not include enough supervisors or enough staff, then the researcher will call employees and ask if they would be willing to be an interview subject. Employees selected for phone calls will be selected from the employee roster supplied by the personnel department. Every 4th name will be contacted. Staff in the investigator's department will not be included. Interviews will take place in the researcher's office and will be taped if the subject gives permission to do so. The researcher will make transcriptions (no names recorded) and the tapes will be destroyed after transcription.

Note: Along with the Research Review Application form, the student researcher will also send a consent form, a copy of the interview questions, and a signed permission letter (on bank letterhead) to the instructor.

Suggested text for permission letters (be sure that the letter is signed and on letterhead):

Example 1:

I have reviewed your request to conduct a research project involving the ABC Corporation and the survey material that will be used. I feel that this project will be beneficial to the ABC Corporation as well as the project's participants. You have my permission to use the ABC Corporation employees as the subject pool for this project.

If you have any questions regarding this letter of approval, please give me a call.

(Under the signature, please include the name and title of the person granting permission. Include a contact phone number here or in the body of the letter.)

Example 2:

I have reviewed your request to use the organization's survey data in your graduate student project. Permission is granted to use this data in your project and the survey data will be provided to you in a summarized format. As we discussed, please refer to the organization as ABC Corporation in your project. When available, please send me a copy of your finished project.

If you have any questions regarding this letter of approval, please give me a call at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

(Under the signature, please include the name and title of the person granting permission.)

Example 3:

I have reviewed your proposed project and agree that it would be beneficial to the corporation. You have my permission to use the production logs, staffing reports, and the purchase order system to gather your data. Please show this permission letter to the relevant units.

If you have any questions regarding this letter of approval, please give me a call at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

(Under the signature, please include the name and title of the person granting permission.)

Example 4:

I have reviewed your proposed survey, and you may distribute the survey and cover letter in the staff mailboxes. The surveys should be completed during breaks or over the lunch hour. Please give me a copy of your project results.

If you have any questions regarding this letter of approval, please give me a call.

(Under the signature, please include the name and title of the person granting permission. Include a contact phone number here or in the body of the letter. Also,

include a statement in the survey cover letter that the survey should be completed on personal time.)

Guidance on selecting interview consent forms:

Interviews generally fall into one of two categories, formal or informal. A formal interview requires the use of the adult consent form, and signatures are obtained. What qualifies as a formal interview? Any plan to tape the interview makes the interview more formal. The adult consent form template covers adding a place for the participant to sign to document agreement with the taping. Interviews with individuals from your organization should also use the adult consent form. If interviewing subordinates, care should be taken that there is no perception of coercion.

An informal interview consent form can be used when the interview is conducted by phone or there is no relationship between the interviewer and the interview subject.

Using children as participants:

Most MSA 699 project do not use children (under age 18) as participants. Note, however, that anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a minor. Child assent and parental/guardian consent must be obtained. The procedures for having this consent in place prior to survey distribution must be part of the information included on the RRA form. Please contact the MSA office for age-appropriate templates. A combined child assent/parental consent form may be appropriate.

Using social media:

The use of social media is permitted to distribute a survey. Surveying family and friends is not considered to be a scholarly approach. However, many professional organizations have social media pages, and it may be appropriate to target such organizations. Along with your RRA form and other supporting materials, include either a permission letter/e-mail which allows you to post a survey invitation or include the organization's policy (as found on the social media site) for posting items. Screenshots of the messaging communications can also be used to document permission.

It is important the participants be able to read the full text of a survey cover letter. It is problematic to post the full text of the cover letter on the social media site. Therefore, include the full text of the survey cover letter as page 1 of your online survey. Use the following sample to develop a short survey invitation that can be posted:

SOCIAL MEDIA SURVEY
Joe Smith, a graduate student in the Master of Science in Administration program invites you to take a voluntary survey about social media and its impact on political campaigns. Interested participants can access the survey at http://www.xcyghsurveymonkey.com. Please note that you must be age 18 or older to participate in this study. Thanks for your help with my project. (Submitted by Joe Smith, MSA program, phone 775-0000, smith8ja@cmich.edu).

Include the text of both the survey cover letter and the short survey invitation with your RRA materials.

Using a paid survey panel:

If you plan to use a paid survey panel, state this specifically on the RRA form. In addition, you may not be able to include the full text of your survey cover letter. If this is the case, include a shortened version of the cover letter in the instruction/introduction area of your online survey.

<Your name>, a graduate student in Central Michigan University's Master of Science in Administration program invites you to take a survey about <project topic>. Your participation is voluntary. You must be age 18 or older to participate in this study. Thanks for your help with my project. I can be contacted at <insert contact information>. My project monitor is <insert name and contact information> and my graduate program can be contacted at msa@cmich.edu

Military students and DoD guidelines:

Students at military locations should be aware that there are DoD regulations regarding the use of other military personnel as human subjects. If you are at a location with a local IRB or exempt-determination officer and plan to use other military personnel as human subjects, you are required to gain approval there as well as at CMU. As a rule of thumb (and not just for the military), avoid questions where the responses could jeopardize someone's career. Also, because of the potential for data-mining, DoD e-mail accounts should not be used if the student plans to use a commercial survey system, such as SurveyMonkey, to distribute surveys.

For additional information, the MSA office will provide the contact information for the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavior and Social Sciences. Students who are DDEAMC personnel (active duty Soldiers or civilians) and plan to conduct research on DDEAMC personal at an army medical facility should follow the guidelines found at https://eisenhower.tricare.mil/Education/Clinical-Investigation and supply the approval letter from the IRB review as part of your RRA package.

FAQs

1. **What will my instructor and the MSA office look for in my Research Review Application materials?**
   In addition to the completeness of your research review application materials, grammar and spelling counts. The fillable Research Review Application form does not allow you to use any spell-checking functions, so be sure to read through for spelling issues and readability. Check the spelling in consent forms and surveys prior to sending the documents to your instructor. This package of documents is a reflection of you and your professionalism. In addition, in consent documents, you are a representative of Central Michigan University. Take time with your RRA materials. Be as detailed and specific as possible.

2. **What are the approval categories on the RRA form?**
   Under the Research Review Application process, we will categorize projects as "non-human subjects" or "human subjects research."

   a. Projects involving data that is not human subjects data, such as financial information or public policies qualifies for the non-human research determination. Survey data may qualify for this category if it already comes to the researcher as summarized and de-identified data. If the source of the data is not available to the general public, a permission letter (on letterhead) should be included in your Research Review Application materials.
   b. Projects involving surveys, interviews, or records studies will fall into the human subjects research category. A copy of the survey/interview questions, a consent document and a permission letter (on letterhead) should accompany your Research Review Application.

   Students who need to seek IRB approval will use IRBManager to submit their protocols. Learn more about IRBManager.

3. **Use of e-mail in distributing and collecting surveys**

   Unfortunately, the use of e-mail to distribute and collect surveys poses a number of issues in terms of subject anonymity. Even if the researcher chooses to delete the emails which contain identifying information, there is still the possibility that the e-mails still exist on hard drives or, in networked systems, , are backed up by the server. Alert the participant to this issue by including text in the cover letter, such as "If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible and return the completed questionnaire promptly by e-mail. Because e-mailed responses are not anonymous, I will maintain the confidentiality of your responses by printing off your survey and then deleting your e-mail. In that way, I will not be able to match names to surveys." As students you have access to many free web-based survey services. You are strongly encouraged to use these services. See also item 20.

4. **Hospital IRBs and other institutional IRBs**

Although you may not be required to go through CMU's Institutional Review Board process, you may be required to seek approval from your hospital's or other institutions' IRB. The IRB approval, on letterhead, from the other institution should be included with your Research Review Application materials. Students who are DDEAMC personnel (active duty Soldiers or civilians) and plan to conduct research on DDEAMC personal at an army medical facility should follow the guidelines found at https://eisenhower.tricare.mil/Education/Clinical-Investigation and supply the approval letter from the IRB review as part of your RRA package.

5. **Secondary data and records studies**

   Secondary data encompasses many types of data, such as financial data, public records, and record reviews (student files, medical files, etc.). In general, data that comes to you in a summarized and/or de-identified format is considered non-human subject research.

   Projects where you, the researcher, have access to raw data either in the form of survey responses, student files, employee files, etc. fall into the human subjects research category. In the Research Review Application, be sure to specify what data is being recorded for purposes of research and be sure that names or other identifying information is not recorded. A data recording sheet should be included with your Research Review Application materials along with a signed permission letter stating that you may use the data in your project.

   Even if you do not need to go through the more formal IRB process, we still need to think about accidentally disclosing data about individuals. There is little risk to subjects if the information is recorded in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to subjects, and consequently there is no possibility of an accidental breach of confidentiality (e.g., even if the researcher lost the data in the airport, there would be no way to link the information to individual persons). So, a key issue is not whether the researcher can see the names in the files, but whether the information is recorded for research purposes without identifiers or codes that link data to names.

   An additional issue is whether using the records for research purposes might be viewed as an impermissible invasion of subject privacy. If the records were created for non-research purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis) and the subjects had high expectation that the records would be kept private, even more care must be given to maintaining confidentiality...Linking names to codes is generally not appropriate. HIPAA regulations must be respected and given priority over any research considerations.

6. **Telephone scripts**

   If a student plans to conduct a telephone survey, the "telephone survey/informal interview template" should be used. The template for this form is found at on the capstone guides and research approval webpage.

7. **Permission letters**

   Approvals to conduct surveys or interviews should be on company or institution letterhead. The letter must be signed. Typed signatures are not acceptable. If the name of the person giving authorization is not clear, you may be required to supply the name. A contact phone number should be included on the letter. E-mail permission letters may be accepted if sent from the organization's e-mail system. Requesting a permission letter may be a lengthy process, for example, if you need review by the legal department or consent from the union. If you are not able to scan your permission letter and add the letter to your Research Review Application materials, please fax a copy of the permission letter to the MSA office (989-774-2575).

8. **Public Property**

   Remember that public property is just that, property belonging to the city or state. However, local ordinances may vary and it is generally prudent to obtain a permission letter. Surveys conducted in supermarket parking lots, in malls, or in front of a business location require letters of permission.

9. **Why is it important to state the number of subjects in my project?**

   Your instructor and the MSA office reviewer need this information to assess one of two things. First is the subject population so small that subject anonymity cannot be protected. Second, if demographic questions are used, can any subject be identified through combined responses to those questions? Ask yourself why you need the demographic information. If you do not plan to use this information in your analysis, then delete the questions. If you wish to merely describe the subject population, there may be other sources, such as the HR department, for that information. Keep in mind that with each demographic question, you are subdividing the sample. For example, your survey has two demographic questions, gender and level of education. In the subject population, there is only one male with a doctorate. If that subject participates in the study, he will not be anonymous.

10. **Do I still need to identify potential risk?**

    The requirement for sound research methodology and appropriate research ethics should always be part of your research project. So, it is important to provide adequate notice to subjects on any potential risks. It is possible for a project to have some risk and be approved if the risk is clearly identified, if subjects are informed of the risk, if the benefits outweigh the risk, and if the investigator has made provisions to minimize the risk. According to the Institutional Review Board and still applicable to the Research Review Application process, "a risk is a potential harm (injury) associated with the research that a reasonable person, in what the investigator knows or should know to be the subject's position, would be likely to consider significant in deciding whether or not to participate in the research." Risk can be more than a breach of confidentiality or the possibility of subject identification.

Additionally, risk may involve sociological issues, psychological issues, and so on. The five major types of risk are physical, psychological, social, legal, and economic. Many projects contain a mixture of risks.

11. When do I use a consent form/cover letter for anonymous surveys and when do I use an adult consent form?

A consent form for anonymous surveys or a survey cover letter is used whenever the project involves a survey which can be returned anonymously by subjects. Anonymous return is achieved by using U.S. mail, interoffice mail, or a secured drop box. An adult consent form is used in the following types of projects:

a. Personal interviews are conducted and questions are non-programmatic
b. Children are involved in the project (Child assent and parental consent are also needed. There are age-specific child assent forms. The adult consent form is used for parents)
c. Subjects are being observed and there is no expectation that their behavior is public

12. What is the difference between programmatic questions and non-programmatic questions?
Programmatic questions are factual in nature. The interview subject is being asked about things, not opinions. For example, "how many employees work here?" is programmatic in nature, while "do you feel that staffing levels are adequate for your store?" is not. Non-programmatic questions ask the subject to express feelings, give an opinion, or make a judgment.

13. What do I say in my consent form/cover letter for anonymous surveys or adult consent form if I am a supervisor?
If you supervise any or all of your subjects, you must reduce the possibility of any perception of coercion on the part of potential subjects. In the consent form for anonymous surveys, you can add the following: "Although I supervise some (or all) of you, your decision to participate or not to participate in this project will not jeopardize your position in any way because I will have no way of knowing who participated and who did not participate." In the consent form, you must acknowledge that you supervise the interviewee and assure the research subject that they may stop at any time or decide not to participate in the interview without repercussion and without putting their jobs in jeopardy.

14. How do I address risk in my consent materials?

If the project involves some potential risk to subjects, for example, recalling episodes of workplace violence, you can add the following to the consent for anonymous surveys or consent form: "Some of the questions included on this survey (or in this interview) may make you feel uncomfortable (Note: this is where you can specify the risk in more detail). Please answer only the questions you are comfortable in answering. You may stop at any time. If you experience any

emotional distress because of this project, please call (XXX) XXX-XXXX which is a contact number for support services (specify the name of the service)." Identify any potential risks as you describe your research methodology on the Research Review Application form. However, please note that you may be asked to revise or remove questions. For example, asking the participant if he/she has been the victim of sexual harassment contains more risk than asking if the participant if he/she has observed harassment.

15. Public lists

When students get names, addresses, and e-mail addresses from a public list, the public list must be one that is accessible to the general public. For example, an online membership directory of an organization that requires a member/user ID and password is not considered to be a public list. Whenever a list is open to members only and not available to the public, CMU requires signed permission from the list owner (on letterhead).

16. Tips for consent documents and cover letters

It is important that the consent documents be consistent with the information found in the Research Review Application and permission letter. For example, if there is a statement in the application form that project results will be shared with management, this information should be in the survey cover letter. If the information in the application indicates that the survey will be returned by interoffice mail, the survey cover letter should contain this instruction. In addition, if the permission letter indicates that the survey should be completed on personal time, this stipulation should be included in the consent document. If you use the consent form format, be sure to write the consent forms as an informational document for the subjects. All of the "I" and "me" references are to the subject, not to the researcher.

17. Anonymity vs. confidentiality

Anonymity can be promised when the researcher not only provides a method of returning a survey that is anonymous and also does not collect any data that could identify individual subjects to the researcher or readers of the final project. Examples of methods for anonymous return are a drop box in a central location, through the mail, through a web-based survey (with no IP addresses collected), through interoffice mail, and so forth. On the other hand, if the researcher's data contains identifiers, names, titles, specific demographic data, the researcher must discuss in the consent form and RRA application how that data will be kept safe. What are the safeguards that the researcher will use to keep the data confidential? How is the data stored? Will it be destroyed? Will signed consent forms be separated from interview notes? Where will interview notes be stored? How will the subjects be referred to in the project? These are among the many issues involved in providing confidentiality.

18. **Do I need both a consent form and a survey cover letter?**

No, in general, only one consent document is necessary. The consent form is a more formal document with its defined sections. The survey cover letter is less formal and allows for a friendlier tone. Either is appropriate. On the other hand, a consent document is needed for each of multiple methodologies. For example, a consent form is needed for an interview process. A survey cover letter is needed for a survey process.

19. **How do I find a subject pool if I am not employed?**

There are many possible sources for your subject pool. Keeping in mind that your project should be concentration related and leadership/administrative in focus, there are many appropriate sources. Here are some suggestions:

   a. A general survey could be distributed to a church congregation. A permission letter from the minister or church board is required. In addition, it is prudent to add an age disclaimer to the survey cover letter.
   b. Professional organizations: If you are a member of a professional organization, you may be able to get permission to survey the organization's membership. A permission letter from the organization's leadership is required.
   c. Internet searches: Many companies include contact information on the company web site. Using a search engine, you can find the company's web site and the contact information. You may also find public lists (no login ID or password needed) that have been developed by someone else.
   d. A local organization may have a pending project. Your volunteer assistance with that project may provide you with a suitable MSA 699 project and access to a subject pool. A permission letter from the organization is required.

20. **Should I use an online survey?**

There are many benefits to using an online survey. An online survey can be inexpensive and efficient as well as providing anonymity to your subjects. By inserting the term "free online surveys" into a search engine, you will be able to find a variety of companies offering a free survey service. Many companies have a student option which is generally limited by the number of questions and subjects. Depending on the price, you may also be able to use a paid survey panel as your subject pool. If you go with this option, clearly articulate this in your RRA form. There are two ways to manage online surveys and your cover letter. One method is placing a link to the survey in the survey cover letter. The survey cover letter text is then e-mailed to the prospective subjects. For example, "Please click the following link <insert survey URL> to access this web-based survey" The other

option is to place the survey link in the invitation e-mail and have the survey cover letter be the first page on the online survey.

Note that Qualtrics is a free survey tool available to all current CMU students. For more information, visit https://cmich.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/KB/ArticleDet?ID=35779.

21. **Can I disguise the name of my organization in my project?**

Your organization may require that you disguise the name of the organization in the MSA 699 project. You may be discussing a proprietary process in your project or discussing a policy change that is not yet public knowledge. However, it is important to understand that using a disguised name, such as ABC Corporation, does not eliminate the need for a signed permission letter (on organizational letterhead). For purposes of the research approval, you must document, with an authentic document, that you have permission to use data, access the subject pool, etc.

22. **Who will have access to my project?**

Your project will be read by your instructor and by a faculty reviewer. A limited number of CMU staff will also have access to your project in the Blackboard shell. This access is needed in case there are process/administrative issues to be resolved and to pull out assessment data. The project is not published by the university. Beyond that, it is up to you whether you share your project with anyone. **Please note that the university does not keep permanent storage of your project. The project is stored in the Blackboard course shell. Blackboard shells are purged on a regular cycle. Be sure to keep your own electronic copy of your project.**